

# SO YOU'RE A LITURGIST?

## What is Liturgy?

Liturgy is the structure of worship for a particular Sunday. The root word literally means “work of the people.” Worship is the work of the congregation. You lead them in that work as a servant of both God and the community, to help draw the community closer to God.

## In a typical order of worship, you would:

1. Lead the Call to Worship
2. Close the Call to Worship with a prayer that invites God’s presence with us
3. Invite people to a time of confession and reflection
4. As part of the assurance of forgiveness, pour the water into the baptismal bowl so the congregation can see and hear the waters of baptism flow for them
5. Introduce the first scripture reading & then read it
6. After the scripture you may, if you wish, leave the chancel and sit in the pews.
7. During the last hymn, move to the West doors to greet people as they exit.

## Preparation:

**Script** – We will email you Sunday’s script on Thursday.

**Practice** — Don’t wait until Sunday!

- Start on Friday meditating on the scriptures and themes, praying and thinking about how you will lead the service.
- Practice reading out loud. Many times!
- Put marks on your script where you want to pause or emphasize a word or phrase.
- If any words are unfamiliar, please consult with the pastor before Sunday.

**Dress** – We encourage you to present yourself in a way that reflects your unique “you” (suit and tie, fancy dress, clothes that reflect your culture, jeans and t-shirts, shorts and sandals, etc.), keeping in mind that you are also serving as a worship leader. Do not wear items that devalue others, highlight partisan politics, or uniforms that represent things that stand against our core values of faith, curiosity, diversity and love. Ask if you have questions.

**Robes and Stoles** – If you are a pastor or church educator, you may wear a robe if you wish. Otherwise please wear one of our special liturgist/reader stoles (a symbol of serving). It should be on the lectern waiting for you. After worship, please put it back on the lectern.

## Before the Service:

- **Check in with the pastor 10 minutes before the service.** If you are in a class, please leave early enough to be in the sanctuary 10 minutes before the service.
- **Take care of any personal needs.**
- **Check out the lectern.** Do you need the step(s)? Make sure the mic is pointed at your mouth. The sound tech will adjust volume as necessary but they can only do so much!
- **Bulletins & Hymnals:** Make sure you have them if you want them.
- **When the prelude begins,** please take your seat on the bench behind the lectern.

## Leading Worship:

- **Pray** – One of the most important things you can do is pray before you step to the lectern. It is only by the power of God that we are able to lead God’s people. So ask God to lead and calm you, and to speak through you as you prepare to and lead the congregation in worship.
- **Flow** – Flow is an important part of the Worship experience. Do not announce what you’re going to do, just do it, otherwise it can feel like we’re moving through a checklist. Much of what you will be given is written out for you, however you are free to change the wording to fit your style of speaking, as long as the basic content of the sections remain the same, as the lead-ins are often written to tie into what follows or the general theme of the service.
- **Greet the congregation** when you first stand up to speak. Be sure to look directly at the camera above the back doors so that the online congregation feels you see them as well as the people in the pews. Introduce who you are and what role(s) you have in the church.
- **Avoid** – Digressing from the script too much with causal comments. That can be a distraction to worship for others, at the same time, be yourself! And if something unexpected happens, it’s OK to acknowledge that.
- **Avoid** – Telling the congregation what posture they should be in, such as “bow your heads to pray.” Be permission giving, not directive.
- **Inclusive Language** – In any comments you might make in your role of worship leader, please avoid gender-dominated language for God. Instead, use more expansive language for God, such as “Creating God,” or “Loving God” or just “God.” For people/persons, rather than “brothers and sisters,” please use “siblings.” In our efforts to be truly welcoming and affirming, we are aware that the language we choose can have a big impact on how people experience us, positively or negatively.

## After the Service:

- **Move** – to the back doorway during the Benediction to greet people as they leave. Remember, not everyone will stay for the postlude.
- **Visitors** – If you don't know the person, introduce yourself, ask them their name, and if this is one of their first times with us, ask them if they filled out a connection card. If not, offer them one, saying that we'd love to reach out to them to welcome them more personally. Invite them to go to the East Entrance for coffee.
- **Connection Cards** – After you finish greeting people, take any connection cards you were given and put them in Carrie's staff mailbox in the main office.
- **Stole** – please put the stole on the lectern.

## Tips for Speaking

- **Breathe** – taking deep slow breaths will help you relax.
- **Volume** – speak slightly louder than you usually would in a normal conversation.
- **Be Clear** – enunciate your words.
- **Eye Contact** – Be familiar enough with the liturgy that you aren't just reading it, rather, you are speaking it and looking up to engage the congregation. Don't forget to include the online congregation by looking at the camera above the back doors.
- **Congregational Readings** – Read "One" parts with conviction and "All" parts boldly. Yours is the only voice the online congregation will hear and understand.
- **Don't Rush** – when people read together, they need a little more time to find a comfortable rhythm than if they were speaking solo.
- **Patience** – give time for people to find the scriptures in their bible before you read.

**Remember: No matter what happens, it's all good.**